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SOURCE Newspapers as indicated.

EXPANSION OF USSR RETAIL TRADE;
CRITICISM OF TRADE ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES

The following report represents a compilation by republics of articles dealing with retail trade in consumers' goods and services in the USSR as they appeared in the Soviet press over the period 12 June - 2 October 1952. While stressing the general improvement and expansion of retail trade, the newspapers frequently criticize the retail trading organizations for inefficient operating methods and violation of trade laws. The most frequently mentioned criticisms concern the following: (1) inadequate selection of goods and poor consideration of consumer needs, (2) pile-up of commodities in warehouses and distribution bases, and (3) inconsiderate and often fraudulent treatment of customers.

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.7

According to data of the Ministry of Trade USSR, quoted by Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, much more agricultural produce, especially vegetables, potatoes, milk, and other dairy products, was delivered to the kolkhoz markets of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Minsk, Frunze, and other large cities and industrial centers of the USSR during the first 8 months of 1952 than in the same period of 1951.

This increase of deliveries, according to the paper, was due to a considerable extent to the system of agreements concluded by the market administrations with kolkhozes. The markets promised to provide the kolkhozes with adequate market space, transportation, and the necessary industrial equipment. In Moscow alone, 33 market administrations concluded more than 900 individual agreements. New kolkhoz markets were opened in Minsk, Tbilisi, Yerevan, and Sverdlovsk. A large market was reopened in Riga, and new markets are now being constructed in Leningrad, Kiev, Stalingrad, Kuybyshev, Novosibirsk, Sochi, Makhachkala, and many other cities. Some of these markets are to be in operation before the end of 1952.(1)

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RSFSRMoscow

According to Moskovskaya Pravda, one of the most important measures taken to improve retail trade in Moscow was the organization and expansion of a network of specialized stores selling certain types of consumers' goods and the establishment of specialized departments and sections in the existing department and mixed-type stores. During the period June-August 1952, 58 well-organized stores dealing mostly in consumers' goods were modernized and reopened.

Most of the specialized stores in Moscow, the paper continued, are managed by three specialized trading organizations: "Mosodezhda" /Moscow Specialized Trading Organization for the Sale of Clothing?/, "Mosobuv" /Moscow Specialized Trading Organization for the Sale of Footwear?/, and "Mostekstil" /Moscow Specialized Trading Organization for the Sale of Textiles?/. The stores now being opened by these trading organizations carry a large assortment of ready-to-wear clothing, footwear, and fabrics of good quality. As of 12 September 1952, "Mosodezhda" had 41 stores in operation (2), the last one, a specialized underwear store, having opened on 26 August 1952. These stores specialize in the sale of wool, silk, and cotton dresses, men's and women's suits, overcoats, underwear, millinery, and furs. Thirteen new stores were opened during the period May-August 1952, and it is planned to open ten more stores before the end of 1952, five of them in September. The commodity trade of "Mosodezhda" increased three times in the fourth quarter 1952 over the fourth quarter 1951.(3) As of 12 September, "Mosobuv" also had 41 stores in operation, and "Mostekstil" 30 stores.

Moskovskaya Pravda stated that it is proposed to increase the number of specialized stores even further; at the suggestion of the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet and the Ministry of Trade USSR, specialized trading organizations for the sale of knit goods, haberdashery, toiletries, housewares, and construction materials are to be created in the near future. "Mostorg" (Moscow State Industrial Goods Stores), the present inter-rayon industrial trading organization of the department store type, is being reorganized into a city trading organization of department stores.(2)

According to Vechernyaya Moskva, a specialized department store of the Ministry of Light Industry that was put into operation on 9 August 1951 can serve as an example of efficient operating and selling methods. The store always considers and caters to its customers' demands and carries a large supply and assortment of fabrics. In addition to many different kinds of summer and early fall fabrics, 150 different designs are available in cotton fabrics and 100 in satin. In the first year of its existence, the store sold over 5 million meters of various fabrics supplied to it by textile enterprises of Moscow, Leningrad, Ivanovo, and other cities.(4)

In another article, Vechernyaya Moskva stated that, although the enterprises of Moscow's local and cooperative industry are meeting their quotas for the production of consumers' goods as a whole, the selection of goods is still poor and some items have proved unusable and of inferior quality. The Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet, it reported, is looking into this matter and is planning to take adequate measures to improve the quality of consumers' goods.(5)

Specialized trading organizations for the sale of food products as well as industrial goods were also established, according to Moskovskaya Pravda. They deal in such products as fruits and vegetables, bread and bakery products, milk and dairy products, meat products, and others. "Mosovoshch" /Moscow Specialized Trading Organization for the Sale of Fruits and Vegetables?/ has in operation 80

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stores, many of which are equipped with refrigeration facilities, conveyers, and hoisting machines.(2) "Pishchetorg" (Food Trading Organization) is to have two new stores in operation by 16 September 1952, according to Vechernyaya Moskva, and "Moskhlebtorg" Moscow Specialized Trading Organization for the Sale of Bread Products? is to open two bakeries in the near future. The Administration of Food Trading Organizations of Moscow is also setting up 150 stands for the sale of vegetables, melons, and other garden produce.(6)

However, as Moskovskaya Pravda pointed out, the managers of some trading organizations are slow in organizing large specialized stores, and "Soyuzgiprotorg" (All-Union State Trade Planning Institute), the planning organ of the Ministry of Trade USSR, which has been entrusted with the development of new industrial equipment for the specialized trade network, so far has done nothing to produce such equipment.(2) In addition, according to Vechernyaya Moskva there have been numerous complaints about food trading stores in some rayons of the city. For example, stores in Zhdanovskiy, Proletarskiy, Molotovskiy, Kuybyshevskiy, and other rayons often lack adequate wrapping paper. Such products as butter are wrapped in regular, not waxed paper. Only the specialized stores receive sufficient quantities of wrapping paper. Wrapping paper for such items as cottage cheese, cucumbers, berries, bread, and even chops is not available at all in the regular food stores. Other complaints include refusal to accept returnable containers, rudeness of sales personnel, and unsanitary conditions in "Pishchetorg" stores.(7)

Leningrad

In the 20 months preceding October 1952, Leningradskaya Pravda reported 104 new food and industrial stores were put in operation. To improve and expand retail trade, specialized trading organizations such as "Lenkhlebtorg" Leningrad Specialized Trading Organization for the Sale of Bread Products?, "Lenobuv" Leningrad Specialized Trading Organization for the Sale of Footwear?, "Lenodezhda" Leningrad Specialized Trading Organization for the Sale of Clothing?, "Lenovoshch" Leningrad Specialized Trading Organization for the Sale of Fruits and Vegetables?, and others were established. At the same time, however, the paper pointed out, there are many serious shortcomings in the operation of some trading organizations and public eating enterprises. It asserted that no attempt is made to meet the consumer demand for certain products and that very often items which are available at distribution bases never make their appearance at the stores. The sales offices of "Glavmyaso" (Main Administration of Meat and Meat Products), "Glavvrybsbyt" (Main Administration of Fish Industry Sales), and others are slow in supplying Leningrad with the necessary food products. The trade in vegetables and potatoes is also poorly organized, the paper stated; "Lenplodocovoshchorg" Leningrad Fruits and Vegetables Trading Organization? does not fulfill its plan for the delivery of potatoes, fruits, and vegetables.

According to the same source, the trade in industrial goods is also deficient, and it is difficult to find children's clothing and other items of goods quality. For example, 11,380 pairs of defective footwear were returned to the trading organizations by its purchasers; many articles for which there is great demand are not manufactured at all.

The operations of many public eating places and cafes have also been subject to criticism, according to Leningradskaya Pravda. In the first 7 months of 1952, it reported, more than 3,000 complaints were registered against nine trading organizations for low-quality food and poor service in some of their eating places.

The paper criticized the service in many stores as deplorable, many stores as dirty and unattractive, and their personnel as rude and dishonest. The plans made for the organization of new stores, remodeling, and construction of warehouses for agricultural produce, it stated, are not being carried out as scheduled.(8)

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Belorussian SSR

Sovetskaya Belorussiya reported that there are still many serious shortcomings in retail stores and public eating enterprises, pointing out that particularly deplorable conditions exist in the public eating rooms in workers' districts and around the new construction projects in Minsk. The selection of dishes, it stated, is extremely limited, the food is of the poorest quality, and tea sometimes is unavailable for several days at a time. It termed the treatment of customers in the trading stores as often very discourteous and the delivery of vegetables and potatoes to the markets of Minsk as very inadequate.(9)

Ukrainian SSR

According to Pravda Ukrainy there are 9,740 specialized stores in the republic; an additional 135 specialized stores selling clothing, footwear, millinery, furniture, and housewares are to be put in operation during the second half of 1952. Public eating enterprises, the paper reported, have improved their service and have been equipped with the latest refrigeration and other facilities.(10) Leninskoye Znamya quoted a Ministry of Trade Ukrainian SSR report that 100 new public eating places were established at mines, plants, and new construction projects as of September 1952 and that an additional 100 public eating places will be opened by the end of 1952. Altogether, there are over 18,000 public eating enterprises in the republic. Special attention is being given to increasing the variety of dishes and to improving the quality of food. In addition to the equipping of public eating places with refrigeration facilities, the preparation of food is now being mechanized.(11)

Despite these improvements, a great deal of criticism was directed by Pravda Ukrainy against the Ministry of Trade Ukrainian SSR for not taking steps to introduce more of the local resources into the trade network and to eliminate above-normal inventories. The ministry's procurement program was said to be poorly organized, with the result that trading organizations of Kiev and other cities find themselves overstocked on some commodities for which there is very little demand from the public. The ministry, the paper reported, is also unaware of the advantages offered by specialization and is slow in organizing trade in such commodities as sewing goods, millinery, textiles, footwear, hosiery, etc. In the first half of 1952, the number of specialized stores in Voroshilovgradskaya, Zaporozhskaya, Nikolayevskaya, L'vovskaya, and other oblasts actually decreased.

The paper stated that some enterprises of the Ministry of Light Industry, Ukrainian Council of Invalids' Cooperatives, and Ukrainian Council of Industrial Cooperatives have allowed the quality of their products such as clothing, footwear, hosiery, etc., to deteriorate, thus violating the plan for assortment and standards.

It criticized trade workers and executive committees of oblast and city soviets for lax control over the quality standards on consumers' goods and for doing nothing to correct the existing deficiencies.

Although kolkhoz market trade has been increasing, the paper continued, its organization needs to be improved and steps should be taken against speculation and reselling. It urged that better shipping and storage facilities for garden and agricultural produce be provided in order to eliminate the great amount of spoilage and loss at present.

It stated also that many complaints have been made against trade personnel, who are of very low caliber, many being guilty of dishonesty, bureaucracy, and

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the squandering of state property, to say nothing of rudeness to customers. Not enough control and preliminary character investigation is exercised by the management in the hiring and training of personnel, it concluded.(10)

Latvian SSR

During the first 8 months of 1952, 134 new stores and trading booths, as well as 85 public eating enterprises, were put in operation. However, according to Sovetskaya Latvya this is not enough to alleviate the insufficient commercial facilities existing in the republic. In planning the construction of new residential housing it was decided to utilize the ground floor space for stores, dining halls, and commercial warehouses, but this regulation is not always observed, the paper stated. It cited as an example the fact that in Riga, where whole streets of houses were built for the workers of the Railroad-Car-Building Plant and the "REZ" (Riga Electrical Machine Building Plant) not a single meter of space was provided for a store or a trade booth. Very often, it continued, designated commercial locations are used for other purposes, housing the administrative offices of various artels, housing projects, workshops, warehouses, and dormitories.(12)

Criticism of some furniture-making enterprises in Riga appeared in Sovetskaya Latvya. The complaint stated that some enterprises ignore consumers' demand for inexpensive and practical furniture and concentrate on more "advantageous" and expensive items. For example, enterprises of the local industry and the Latvian Council of Industrial Cooperatives, in the first half of 1952, not only failed to meet the production plan by 962,000 rubles, but also failed to manufacture enough reasonably priced furniture because they consider it "disadvantageous" to produce. Although spring mattresses are in constant demand, the enterprises of the local industry have produced only 350 of them instead of the 900 specified by the plan. Bookcases, window cornices, and coat hangers are impossible to find. There are many beds for adults, but hardly any children's beds are available. Failure to manufacture enough of these beds is blamed on the lack of metal pipes, although it would be possible to substitute some other material for the purpose.(13)

Lithuanian SSR

According to Sovetskaya Litva, a large new specialized sporting goods store is ready to be opened in Vil'nyus; it is the sixth specialized store to be opened in recent months. A large food store is also ready to put in operation, and a number of other specialized stores for the sale of foodstuffs, clothing, footwear, fabrics, furniture, dishes, household utensils, and other necessities are to be established in Vil'nyus and other cities of the republic. A great deal of work is also in progress in Vil'nyus, the paper stated in remodeling and expansion of the existing trading centers, while special attention is given to installation of refrigeration facilities, counters, and storage space, in food stores.(14)

Nevertheless, complaints about trade deficiencies still prevail in the Lithuanian press. Sovetskaya Litva reported that trading organizations of "Glavle-gabyt" (Main Administration of Sales), Ministry of Light Industry, are very inefficient in their procurement of in-season clothing. Instead of summer apparel, the stores are full of winter clothes for which there is no present demand. Utenskiy Rayon Consumers' Union, for example, received 50,000 rubles' worth of goods, 10,000 rubles' worth of which were out of season.(15)

Another example cited by the same paper was that of Shvenchenskiy Rayon, where retail store sell various types of inferior products and there have been many cases of overcharging in public eating enterprises. Because the directors of rayon executive committees are indifferent to cooperative trade the paper

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continued, the sale of necessary goods to kolkhozes and kolkhoz farmers is being delayed. Such items as window glass, graded and roofing iron sheets, cement, shovels, axes, and other implements and materials are not available in country stores (sel'mags), although large supplies of these materials may be found stored in warehouses.

City workers, the paper reported, complain that bakery products, kerosene, and other necessities are not available in the stores for long intervals, but all complaints go unheeded by the bureaucratic administrations of trading organizations. It pointed to the Lithuanian Consumers' Union as being particularly to blame, since it has illegally increased prices on its products in order to cover transportation costs.(16)

Estonian SSR

According to Sovetskaya Estoniya report, the management of the Central Union Consumers' Cooperatives has taken steps to improve and increase trade in ready-to-wear goods to meet the growing demand for such products in villages. The sale of these goods is at present concentrated in rayon and village stores as well as in the large stores of fishermens' and sovkhoz cooperatives. It is expected that during 1952 consumers' cooperatives will put 150 new specialized ready-to-wear millinery stores into operation and open special departments in 800 large rayon stores.(17)

A great deal of criticism constantly appears in Estonian newspapers about shortages and mismanagement. Sovetskaya Estoniya reports that despite overfulfillment of the retail trade plan as a whole, many trading organizations still do not meet their individual plans. These include retail stores of industrial cooperatives and the trade network of the local and the shale and chemical industry. Both of these networks, according to the report, have over 100 stores in operation carrying on extensive trade in products manufactured by industrial cooperatives and local industrial combines. The fact that the plan was not fulfilled, the paper stated, indicates that industrial cooperatives and local industry still fail to use local raw materials to produce goods demanded by consumers. The paper cited as an example the failure of the Ministry of Local Industry and the Ministry of Shale and Chemical Industry to carry out the plan for the manufacture of a large quantity of sandals for spring and summer wear, simply because of lack of thread to sew the soles of the sandals, although the thread itself is manufactured in the republic.

The same source stated that some trading organizations have large stocks of footwear, clothing, hosiery, and other items stored in their warehouses, while at the same time these products are not available in sufficient quantity in the retail stores. Contrary to government regulations, it continued, many of these trading organizations have overstocked on commodities for which there is no current demand.(18)

In another article, Sovetskaya Estoniya complained as follows about deplorable conditions existing in the shoe trading organizations of Tallin, where at one time one million rubles' worth of shoes had accumulated: Shoes originally of first quality are stored in crowded basements, attics, and cold garages where the temperature does not meet the required storage standards. For example, the warehouse of one of the big stores in Tallin is located in the basement where there is no daylight or ventilation. Because of crowded conditions, workers are forced to distribute the shoes in open courtyards. Footwear accumulated in the warehouses under such conditions eventually falls into the category of "spoiled merchandise" or is delivered to the stores dusty, mildewed, and out of shape and in broken or crushed boxes. Rubber footwear, which should only be stored in certain temperatures is stored where temperatures fluctuate from extreme cold to extreme warmth.

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The report continued: the warehouses of "Glavunivermag" (Main Administration of Department Stores) are not much better than those of the industrial trading establishments. They are scattered all over the city and are just as cramped. A great deal of leather and rubber footwear is stored there for years. It is kept in bulk, usually without boxes or other cover. Many of the shoe stores in Tallin are poorly equipped and unattractive, which might account for the fact that footwear does not move from the shelves. Sales and procurement are also poorly organized; orders to the shoe factories are given without due consideration for consumers' tastes and requirements. This results in the accumulation of one type of footwear and a shortage of another (19)

Some criticism also appeared in Sovetskaya Estoniya concerning the organization of kolkhoz market trade. A number of large kolkhozes in Estonia which normally have large surpluses of agricultural produce were unable to open their pavilions because of lack of space. There were only 29 kolkhoz pavilions in Tallin where there should have been at least 60. Shipping facilities have also been bad. The paper stated that their inadequacy had prompted the Council of Ministers Estonian SSR to decree the organization of receiving centers at kolkhozes and co-operatives where kolkhoz farmers could deliver milk and other produce every day without making extra trips to the city, but that not much had been done to carry this decree out. (20)

Karelo-Finnish SSR

Strong criticism of the operations of trading organizations and enterprises appeared in two separate articles in Leninskoye Znamya. Complaints were made of shortages, inefficiency, inferior quality, and the pile-up of commodities in warehouses. The paper cited the following examples: The stores of the Petrozavodsk city trading organization often lack sufficient supplies of tooth paste, shoelaces, razors, and other everyday necessities. In the stores of the Ministry of Timber Industry the delivery of commodities was delayed by 38 days. The same situation exists in the Karelo-Finnish Consumers' Union and in the DorURS (Administration of Workers' Supply) of the Kirov Railroad System. The warehouses of these two organizations are full of goods amounting to millions of rubles in excess of norm, whereas the stores do not meet the prescribed minimum of salable commodities. (21)

The paper also cited many examples of cases where large surpluses of goods for which there is little demand were allowed to pile up in warehouses. DorURS of the Kirov Railroad System gave an order to ORS (Workers' Supply Division) of the Kem' Railroad Division to accept a supply of beans that would last for at least 10 years. In addition, 24,000 rubles' worth of children's socks were delivered there although 12,000 rubles' worth of socks were already in stock. The stores of the Kalevala Rayon Consumers' Union have enough stocks of barley to last for at least 5 years, while other grain is not available. The Division of Workers' Supply stores of Nadvoitskiy Lespromkhoz (Timber Management) often lacks such commonly used products as soap, matches, grains, etc. There are also cases of violation of the trade laws. For example, such commodities as furniture, sports goods, musical instruments, pictures, dishes, and others which should only be sold for cash are often sold on credit. (22)

Leninskoye Znamya charged that the Ministry of Trade Karelo-Finnish SSR is negligent in its management of the trading organizations. Even in Petrozavodsk, it said, the sales personnel do not bother to wrap purchases for their customers and are generally very unattractive. (21)

Armenian SSR

During 1951 - 1952, according to Izvestiya, 130 new stores and public eating enterprises have come into existence in the Armenian SSR. The number of specialized stores has been doubled. Specialized stores selling clothing, fur articles, footwear, and food products are now in operation in Yerevan, Leninakan, and Kirovakan. (23)

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Retail trade in Yerevan, another Izvestiya report stated, has shown particular growth. Between mid-1951 and mid-1952, four new kolkhoz markets, several trading places, and 35 stores and cafes were opened.(24) A new three-story enclosed central market was recently put in operation. It houses ten kolkhoz stores and a pavilion where meats, dairy products, vegetables, and fruits are offered for sale. In addition, storage space, refrigeration lockers, and laboratories for checking the quality of products have also been provided.(24) Other stores in Yerevan, according to the paper, are now equipped with new weighing and slicing machines, refrigeration facilities, counters, and show windows, while the stores and public eating enterprises are staffed with more competent workers. In 1952, about 200 young commodity specialists, economists, technologists, and other specialists, all graduates of trade tekhnikums and culinary schools, have entered the ranks of trade workers.(23)

Georgian SSR

The Ministry of Trade Georgian SSR, according to Zarya Vostoka, has established a specialized trading organization, "Gruzodezhda" /Georgian Specialized Trading Organization for the Sale of Clothing?/, to improve trade in ready-to-wear clothing, fur articles, and millinery. The stores of "Gruzodezhda" are to be equipped with their own workshops where minor repairs and garment pressing can be done. The Ministry of Trade allocated about 2 million rubles for the equipment of these new specialized stores.(25) To supplement the expansion of trade in ready-to-wear garments, the same paper reported in another article, the ministry also organized a specialized trading organization for the sale of footwear for which it is allocating 300,000 rubles. In Tbilisi, the new trading organization is to have several stores equipped with special showrooms and storage facilities. Special courses to train about 60 shoe salesmen are now being organized.(26)

Zarya Vostoka reported that on 20 June 1952, there were about 60 specialized stores in Tbilisi -- 17 of them dealing in industrial goods and 43 in food products. Most of these stores, according to the paper, are centrally located and are well equipped and well stocked, but some stores do not meet this standard. For example, the stores of "Glavkonditer" (Main Administration of Confectionery Industry) and "Glavvrybsbyt" should be remodeled, while the stores of "Glavshveysbyt" (Main Administration for the Sale of Garments), Ministry of Light Industry, offer an extremely limited selection of such essential goods as men's summer coats, trousers, suits, and other necessary articles. Some of the specialized stores in Tbilisi are slow in modernizing, do not participate in competition, and offer poor service to their customers.(27)

According to another report, the executive committee of the city soviet has allocated space for new food stores in various rayons of the city. New stores for the sale of tea, coffee, foodstuffs, fruits, and vegetables, and soft drinks are expected to go into operation in the near future.(28)

Tadzhik SSR

As reported in Kommunist Tadzhikistana, the party and local soviets of Stalinabad have carried out a number of measures to improve trade in agricultural produce at the city's kolkhoz markets. As a result, a wide variety of agricultural produce was made available to the consumer. Agreements were made between the markets and the kolkhozes for the delivery of meat, flour, vegetables, potatoes, and other products. The markets now provide better transportation and service facilities to kolkhoz farmers delivering their produce. Adequate measures have also been taken to maintain proper sanitary conditions at the markets. On the average, the supply of agricultural produce in June, as compared with May 1952, has increased 40 percent. Large quantities of meat,

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flour, cabbage, onions, cucumbers, grains, and fruit have become available at lower prices. Due to the increased deliveries, the prices on beef and mutton have decreased by an average of 20 percent and on potatoes and onions, by 50 percent. Prices on cucumbers and cabbage are considerably lower.(29)

Turkmen SSR

Complaints that the regulations established by the Ministry of Trade Turkmen SSR governing the footwear trade are being flagrantly violated by stores have appeared in Turkmenkaya Iskra. For example, the stores of the Maryyskiy and Chardzhouskiy rayon trading organizations have no chairs, footstools, portable mirrors, or other facilities for fitting shoes. Many of these stores, instead of carrying a complete supply of other shoe products such as shoe creams, brushes, shoe horns, plates, etc., carry only one or another of these items. Similar conditions exist in many stores of Ashkhabad industrial trading organizations. Shop window displays of Ashkhabad industrial trading organizations are very poor, while the stores of Chardzhouskiy and Maryyskiy rayon trading organizations have no shop windows at all.(30)

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